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Att

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PEOPLES TEMPLE
OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST
Jim Jones, Pastor

P. O. Box 15023
San Francisco, CA 94115
(415) 922-6418

23 August 1977

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/IR
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"For I was an hungered
and ye gave me meat:
I was thirsty
and ye gave me drink;
I was a stranger
and ye took me in;
Naked, and ye clothed me;
I was sick and ye visited me;
I was in prison,
and ye came unto me.

"Then shall the righteous
Answer him, saying,
When saw we thee an hungered
And fed thee?
Or thirsty,
And gave thee drink?
When saw we thee a stranger
And took thee in?
Or naked, and clothed thee
Or when saw we thee sick?
Or in prison,
And came unto thee?

"Verily I say unto you,
Inasmuch as ye have done it
Unto one of the least of these...
...Ye have done it unto me"

Matthew 25:35-40

Jimmy Carter
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Carter:

I am writing to you because our church, Peoples Temple, is currently the target of what religious and community leaders in this area have agreed is a vicious smear campaign, based upon a series of spurious, unsubstantiated and outrageous allegations. The vehicle initially carrying these attacks was a magazine owned by scandalmonger and sensationalist news magnate Rupert Murdoch, whose Village Voice recently targeted you for attack ("Nixon's Third Term," August 1, 1977). We feel that these press attacks on us have a neo-McCarthyite dimension, which I will clarify later on. A few of the media here have taken up the vendetta, and are publishing a steady barrage of articles, calling for investigations of us by several government agencies. These are already underway, though the investigators have recently indicated that they can find, after extensive interviewing, no evidence of criminal activity, despite the sound and fury of the press attacks. Already persons who made some of these allegations are, under scrutiny, disavowing their stories.

It is clear that the reporters involved have obviously not probed the allegations of their sources, and only one newspaperman in the area, the president of the black press association (NNPA), has spoken out in our defense. The character of the sources, as well as the private investigator they have hired, is highly questionable. (The investigator, a Mr. Mezor, has served two terms in jail for felonies, and has only the flimsiest of credentials). We have compiled a series of affadavits on those making the charges which detail how some of them at one time even tried to persuade or even force members of our church to take a course of violence and terrorsim in order to advance progressive social goals. Another of the sources even idolized Hitler. When Rev. Jones learned of some of this provocateur-type activity, he came down most firmly against these persons, and some were asked to leave the church. Others who have harbored resentments against Peoples Temple for petty, personal reasons, have also been brought together in a co-ordinated effort

explicitly designed to destroy our church, and have even bragged about it.

An individual responsible for "bringing together" some of those who have offered testimony against Peoples Temple, at one time was going around portraying himself as a "Treasury agent." We were highly suspicious, and checked on it with the IRS, who thought it was someone working independently. When this man later surfaced at the time the story about us broke last month, we were doubly suspicious. We have also learned that this same individual approached an American Indian leader asking him to give damaging testimony against us. We noted the man's own legal problems considerably worsened shortly after he refused to co-operate in the scheme.

The entire business is having the lamentable effect of alienating from society a great number of our younger members, many ow whom were problem children, delinquents, and drug users, who we have painstakingly worked with to overcome their previous disaffection with society and their lack of desire to work responsibly for its betterment. We fear that they may, along with many others, turn back to former patterns of antisocial, even destructive behavior.

But our concern rests at an even deeper level, which has prompted us to write you. One of our most significant projects in recent years has been the establishment of a large agricultural mission/community in the Caribbean nation of Guyana. Originally conceived of as a practically-oriented mission that would help the nation in the development of a diversified tropical agriculture, medical services, and small-scale technology, the project has evolved into a full-scale community of several hundred, and has won the praises of government officials here (Lt. Governor Mervyn Dymally of California visited there) and in Guyana, where it has been called the most successful project of its kind in the nation. Recently, Ambassador Andrew Young was in Guyana, and has since mentioned that we should be supportive of newly-emerging nations pursuing progressive social courses. Our desire has been to foster goodwill and a co-operative spirit there that shows the essentially positive and generous nature of the American people. Rev. Jones has been a kind of "good will ambassador" in Guyana, speaking on the radio frequently, and from various pulpits.

We are concerned that the smear attacks on Peoples Temple (which have of late included several press portrayals of our mission as a "hard labor" camp) may be needlessly, tragically, and purposely endangering good will and understanding that Rev. Jones and his staff have carefully built up over several years. We have a marvelous opportunity to show the developing nations of the world that the American people are supportive and interested in their populations attaining a good life, and will even (as we have) offer practical assistance in a spirit of co-operation and humanitarian service. This can also overcome mistrust and a legacy of "the ugly American" that has hindered progress in relations with these nations.

Again, we have been pained by the way the media has attempted to smear this innovative, marvelous human service program which has taken us years and a great "labor of love" to build, and a great deal of our church's resources. We have established the mission/community in Guyana entirely with our own resources.

We are persuaded, then, that the attacks on Peoples Temple are motivated by a desire to disrupt that new trend in American diplomacy, especially in the Caribbean. We are wondering, therefore, if there might be some way in which your office could assist or advise us in counteracting the appalling power of the press to pressure investigative agencies, and even manipulate them into crediting irresponsible attempts to slander, smear, and vilify our church and our minister.

Peoples Temple has always been and will continue to be supportive of your Administration in its efforts to achieve human rights and peace throughout the world. You have created a real feeling of hope and trust that seemed to have vanished from national leadership. Our faith in you may be gauged by our bringing this matter to your attention in a spirit of candor and concern.

Ambassador Young and Mrs. Carter, as well as the Vice-President, have especially impressed and encouraged us in their diplomatic missions, that America can take a decisive lead in bringing the world closer to the vision of compassion and tolerance you have articulated as President.

Sincerely yours,

Richard D. Tropp

RICHARD D. TROPP
Executive Assistant to Rev. Jim Jones

Enclosures

cc. to: Mrs. Rosalynn Carter
Vice President Walter Mondale
State Department Office of Caribbean Affairs

ADDENDA

1. Approximately ten months ago, the mayor of Mayersville, Mississippi, Ms. Unita Blackwell Wright, spoke at Peoples Temple about her experiences in the Peoples Republic of China, which she toured with Shirley McLaine recently. During her talk, we noticed a man loitering in the alley adjacent to our church, with what appeared to be monitoring devices. We traced him through the license plate of the car rental vehicle he used, to what appears to be an intelligence unit attached to Senator Stennis. We have tried to find out more about this odd occurence, through the help of our local Congressman, but to no avail. It is incidents like this that cause us great apprehension that smear campaigns based upon spurious, flimsy allegations may have considerably more far-reaching implications and purposes.

2. Our frequent amateur radio contact between San Francisco and Guyana has given us a great opportunity to spread good will among thousands of operators who have facilitated our radio contact. Just the other night we were in touch with over 20 operators who learned of the co-operation of our country with Guyana through our church mission program.